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WESTERN DISTRICT OF LOUISIANA
ALEXANDRIA, LOUISIANA

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
WESTERN DISTRICT OF LOUISIANA
ALEXANDRIA DIVISION

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

CIVIL ACTION NO. 65-12721

-vs-

JUDGE DRELL

AVOYELLES PARISH SCHOOL BOARD

MAGISTRATE JUDGE KIRK

ADDITIONAL REASONS FOR RULING

The Court has been presented with a proposed Consent Order in this matter which, if signed, would find that the Avoyelles Parish School system is unitary. The court has already orally declared its concurrence with a draft version of the order. The order resulted from a mediated procedure ordered by the Court last year. That mediation was conducted by Dr. Percy Bates, a well-recognized expert in the field of school desegregation cases for many years.

This case is one of several remaining in which unitary status had never been reached, even though it has technically been in litigation for roughly fifty years. Approximately nine years ago, the undersigned required that the School Board get to work on specific compliance with the requirements of the so-called Green Factors in the quest for achieving unitary status. As part of the process, the Board retained the services of Dr. William Gordon, another exceptionally well-qualified expert in desegregation cases. Dr. Gordon carefully guided the Board and its then-new superintendent, Dr. Dwayne Lemoine, in the effort. We are especially indebted to these two men who both strove at each opportunity to “get it right.”

What this Court has seen along the way is a hopeful transformation of a school board which was initially tentative, recalcitrant, and partially uninformed regarding the depth of its responsibilities in the desegregation area. That board has now matured and we have seen a remarkable effort within the board to get along and get on with the work of providing the best for the children of Avoyelles Parish.

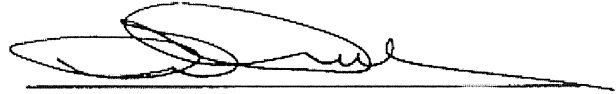
We also cannot say enough about the good faith efforts of Mr. Charles Riddle, District Attorney of Avoyelles Parish, and Mr. Allen Holmes, the long time intervenor in this suit. Both of these men have gone the absolute extra mile in getting this good work done. Their labors have been successful, and they are to be congratulated.

So, too, was the good and faithful work put into this case by Mr. Franz Marshall, Mr. Mark Dann, and several other past representatives from the U.S. Justice Department, together with several experts retained on behalf of the Government. We were pleased to find that these people were careful, diligent, and interested in only the best result understanding the local situation in every reasonable way.

The net effect of these efforts is the consent order, which speaks for itself. The Court's part from here forward will be simply to be sure that the progress made so far continues and to require that the commitments made are fulfilled. We will watch, now hopefully from the sidelines, to see that THIS School Board does not forget the children in the name of personal politics. Hopefully, they have learned that, together, they can do great work. For every child who is successfully educated in Avoyelles parish constitutes hope for the future. For this board and its new Superintendent, Blaine Dauzat, now to move forward with that goal in mind will help to create an atmosphere of success and prosperity perhaps beyond their wildest dreams!

Thus, in executing this Consent Order, we can only add, "Well Done" to all who have helped to fashion the attitudes and changes that made this day arrive. It was, is, and always will be FOR THE CHILDREN! Each must remember that.

Signed on this 21st day May, 2015 at Alexandria, Louisiana.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dee D. Drell", written over a horizontal line.

DEE D. DRELL, CHIEF JUDGE
UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT